Listing Of The Claims:

1.   (Currently amended)   In a restaurant of the type in which a plurality of food items are displayed in individual food display containers, customers assemble meals by removing portions of food items from the display containers, and the removed portions are cooked together, a method for assembling a meal, comprising:

selecting a plurality of menu items, each menu item comprising a plurality of food items;

assigning a unique identifier to each menu item;

displaying each of the food items in an individual food item display container; and

providing a label associated with each food item display container, each label comprising all unique identifiers associated with each menu item in which the food item is included;

removing portions of food items from each individual food item display container having an associated label comprising one of said unique identifiers; and,

placing the portions of food items removed from each of the individual containers having an associated label comprising one of said unique identifiers in a collection container.

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2.   (Previously presented)   A method for assembling a meal according to Claim 1, wherein each menu item comprises food items which are compatible with each other.

3.   (Previously presented)   A method for assembling a meal according to Claim 1, further comprising providing a menu comprising each of the unique identifiers.

4.   (Previously presented)   A method for assembling a meal according to Claim 3, further comprising providing on the menu the names of each food item in each set of food items in association with the unique identifier associated with each menu item.

5.   (Previously presented)   A method for assembling a meal according to Claim 3, further comprising providing on the menu an arbitrary name for each menu item in association with the unique identifier associated with each menu item.

6.   (Previously presented)   A method for assembling a meal according to Claim 3, wherein the menu comprises a menu board.

7.   (Previously presented)   A method for assembling a meal according to Claim 3, wherein the menu comprises a plurality of tags each comprising one of the unique identifiers.

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8.   (Previously presented)   A method for assembling a meal according to Claim 1, further comprising attaching each label to a sneeze guard located proximate the food display containers.

9.   (Previously presented)   A method for assembling a meal according to Claim 1, further comprising attaching each label to a food display container.

10.   (Cancelled)

11.   (Cancelled)

12.   (Currently amended)   A method for assembling a meal according to Claim ~~11~~ 1, further comprising cooking all the food items contained in the collection container together.

13.   (Previously presented)   A method for assembling a meal according to Claim 12, further comprising placing the cooked food items in a serving container.

14.   (Previously presented)   A method for assembling a meal according to Claim 13, further comprising serving the cooked food items in the serving container as a meal.

15.   (Previously presented)   A method for assembling a meal according to Claim 11, further comprising providing representations of the unique identifiers for the collection containers.

16. (Previously presented) A method for assembling a meal according to Claim 15, wherein the representations are releaseably attachable to the collection containers.

17. (Previously presented) A method for assembling a meal according to Claim 16, wherein the representations comprise an adhesive for releasable attachment to a collection container.

18. (Previously presented) A method for assembling a meal according to Claim 16, wherein the representations comprise a spring-loaded clamp for releasable attachment to a collection container.

19. (Previously presented) A method for assembling a meal according to Claim 15, wherein the representations are permanently attached to the collection containers.

20. (Previously presented) A method for assembling a meal according to Claim 1, wherein each unique identifier is a color.

21. (Previously presented) A method for assembling a meal according to Claim 1, wherein each unique identifier comprises alphanumeric characters.

22. (Previously presented) A method for assembling a meal according to Claim 1, wherein each unique identifier comprises a Braille symbol.

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23.   (Previously presented)   A method for assembling a meal according to Claim 1, wherein each unique identifier comprises an iconographic symbol.

24.   (Currently amended)   In a restaurant of the type in which a plurality of food items are provided in individual food display containers, meals are assembled by selecting portions of food items from the display containers, and the selected portions are cooked together, a method for assembling a meal comprising:

preselecting a plurality of menu items, each menu item comprising a plurality of food items;

assigning a unique identifier to each menu item; and

providing a label associated with each food item display container, each label comprising all unique identifiers associated with each menu item in which the food item is included; and,

placing selected portions of food items in a collection container.

25.   (Previously presented)   The method for assembling a meal according to Claim 24, further comprising providing a menu comprising each of the unique identifiers.

26.   (Previously presented)   A method for assembling a meal according to Claim 24, further comprising attaching each label to a sneeze guard located proximate the food display containers.

27.   (Previously presented)   A method for assembling a meal according to Claim 24, further comprising attaching each label to a food display container.

28.   (Currently amended)   A method for assembling a meal according to Claim 24 further comprising providing representations of the unique identifiers for collection containers; and

~~placing selected portions of food items in a collection container.~~

29.   (Currently amended)   In a restaurant of the type in which a plurality of food items are displayed in individual food display containers, customers assemble meals by selecting portions of food items from the display containers, and the selected portions are cooked together, a system for assembling a meal, comprising:

a plurality of menu items, each menu item comprising a plurality of food items;

a unique identifier associated with each menu item;

a plurality of display containers, each containing one of said food items; ~~and~~

associated with each display container, a representation of all unique identifiers associated with each menu item in which the food item in the display container is included; and

a collection container for receiving food items.

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30. (Previously presented)   A system for assembling a meal according to Claim 29, wherein each menu item comprises food items which are compatible with each other.

31. (Previously presented)   A system for assembling a meal according to Claim 29, further comprising a menu containing representations of the unique identifiers.

32. (Previously presented)   A system for assembling a meal according to Claim 31, wherein the menu comprises a list of the names of each food item included in each menu item associated with the unique identifier associated with the menu item.

33. (Currently amended)   A system for assembling a meal according to Claim 29, wherein the ~~further comprising a~~ collection container ~~having~~ comprises a representation of one of the unique identifiers.

34. (Previously presented)   A system for assembling a meal according to Claim 33, wherein the representation is releasably attached to the collection container.